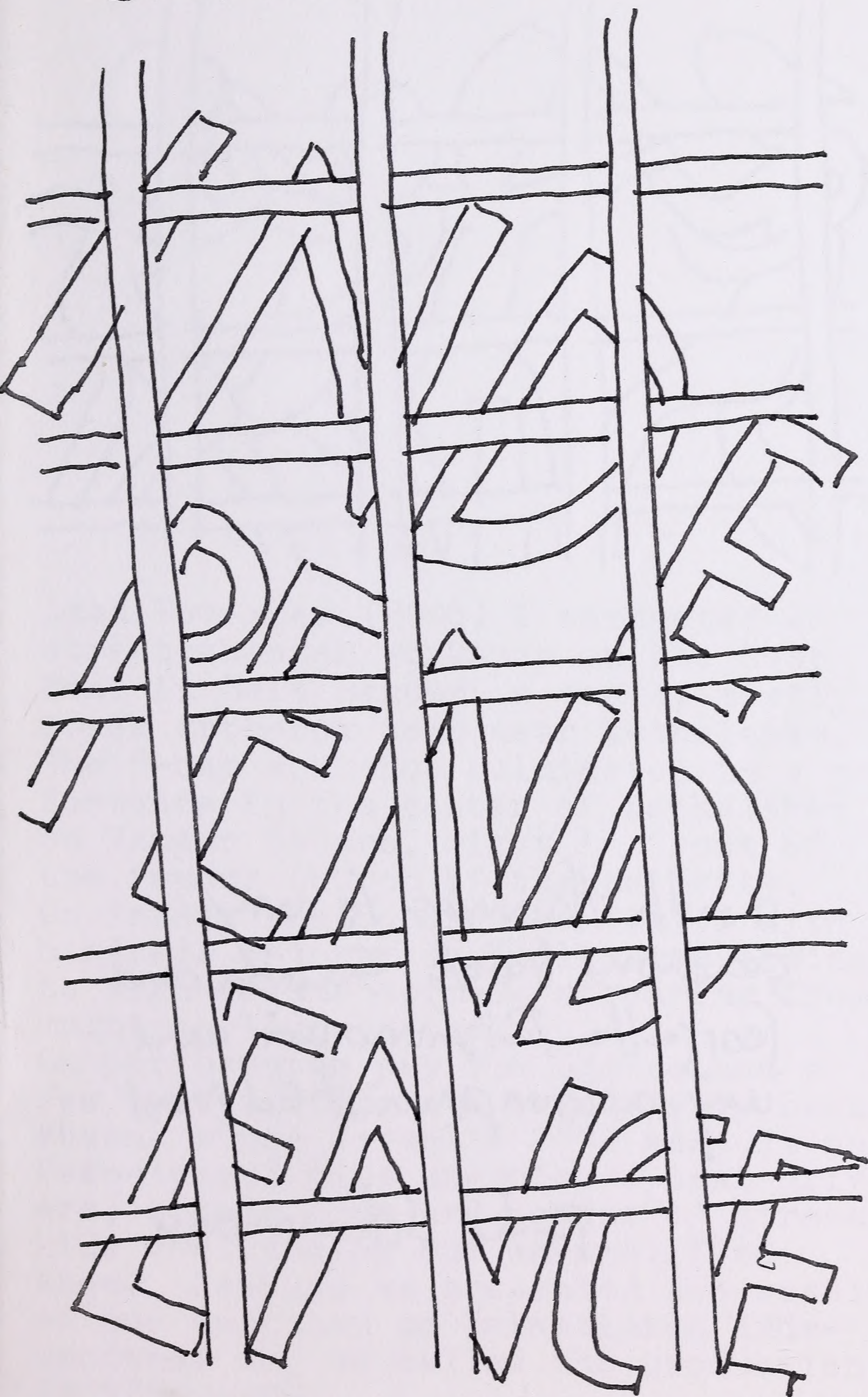
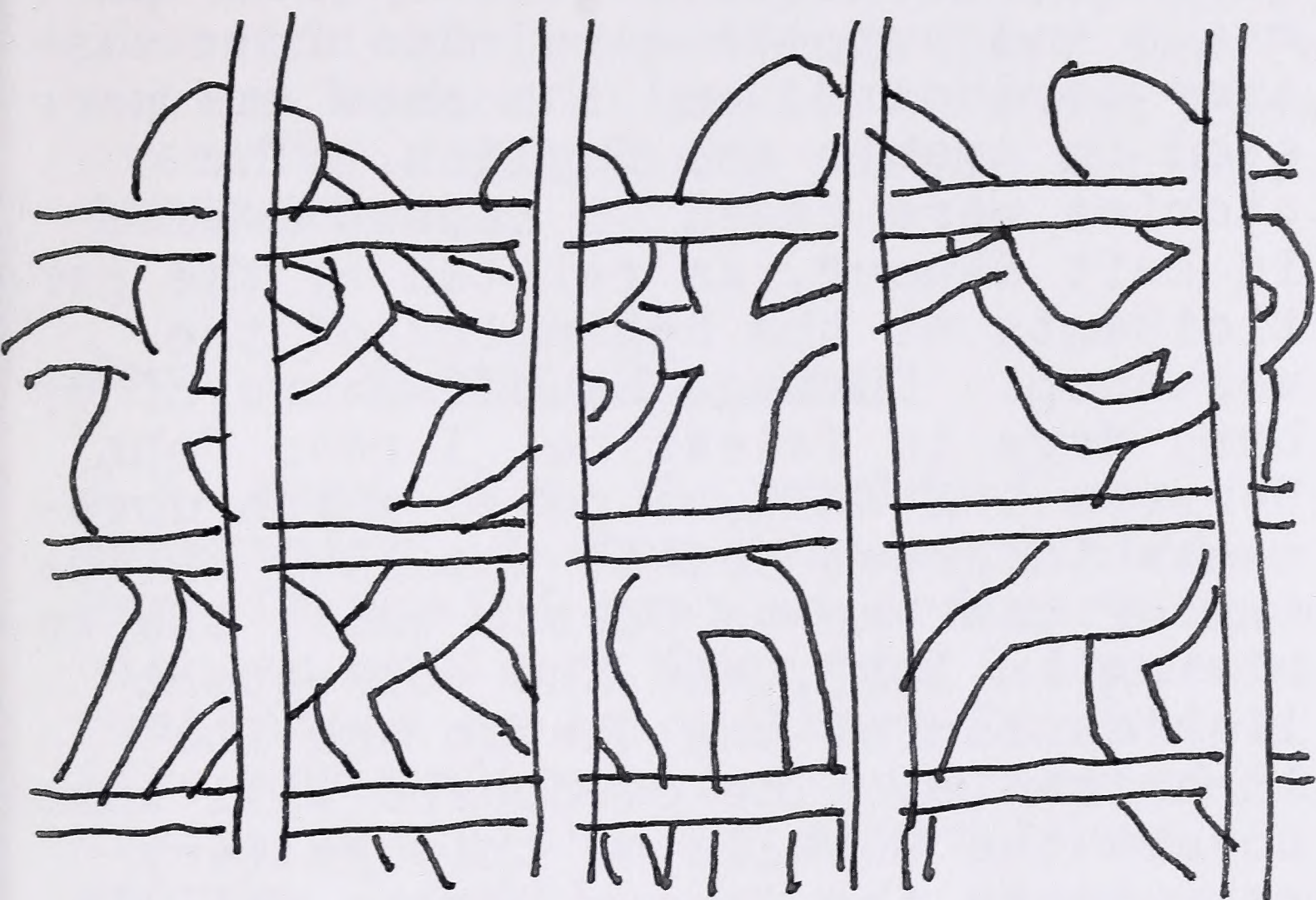


BREAD & PUPPET 07



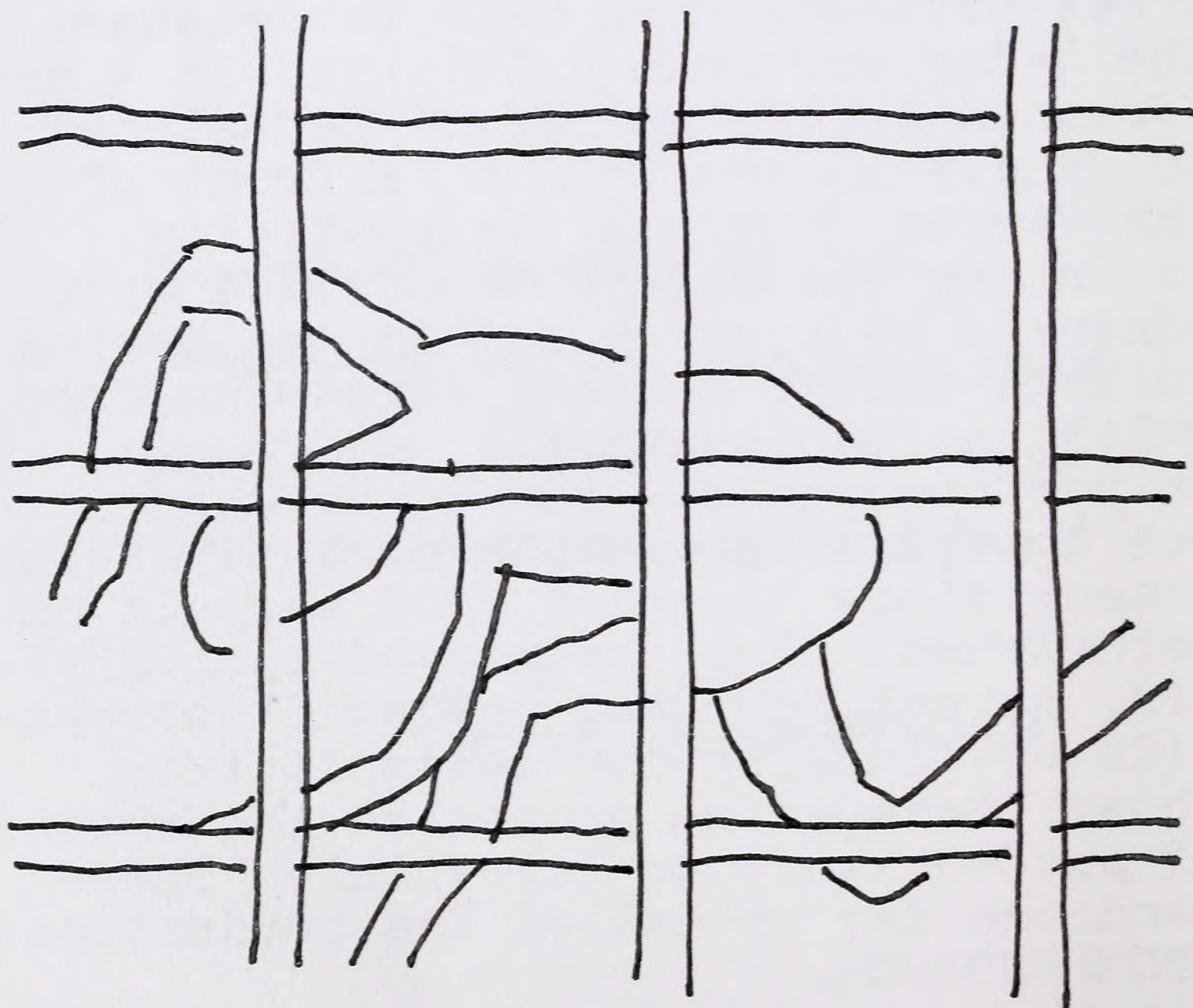
with thanks to my
gracious hosts Saliba and
Georgette Rishmauri and
my accompanist Ed Most

Peter Schumann



Last November (2006) I conducted a street-theater workshop on the West Bank in Beit Sahour, a small, mostly Greek Orthodox town near Bethlelehem. The 8-day workshop culminated in a performance in the center of Bethlelehem on Manger Square, right in front of the famous Church of the Nativity. On Friday the Square was filled with hundreds of praying Muslim men bowing to high-volume sermons streaming from multiple loudspeakers. On performance day the Square had a few guests (tourists have mostly been absent since Israel's 2002 assault on Bethlelehem) plus unemployed taxi-drivers, street cops and hordes of street-kids challenging our un-amplified show. Because we presented the result of our workshop on Palestinian Independence day we called the production: INDEPENDENCE.

Our show consisted of 4 seperate parts masks and puppets were made from toss-away cardboard; and the show was narrated in Arabic and English. The stories were based on recent events in Beit Sahour, as related by the participants at the beginning of the workshop. During the off-hours of my busy days in Palestine, I read John Herseys THE WALL, a novel which documents in great detail the 1940 building of the Warsaw Ghetto wall, the uprising in 1943, and the consequent liquidation of the Ghetto and its inhabitants. The cardboard wall which covers the 3 walls of this gallery represents the Warsaw Ghetto wall in whose shadow I experienced Palestine. The text fragments on the cardboard wall are from John Hersey's book.



And now, ladies and gentlemen, on the occasion of Independence Day, the Palestine branch of Bread & Puppet Theatre presents a play in 4 parts, titled: INDEPENDENCE.

Part I: A Crocodile Tear

T.V. says: I am the world, I see everything, I show you everything. Here is what I see: an ordinary House with an ordinary Door and 2 Innocent Bystanders on an ordinary Day which like any ordinary Day runs around like crazy, until the Day says: I had enough, I quit!

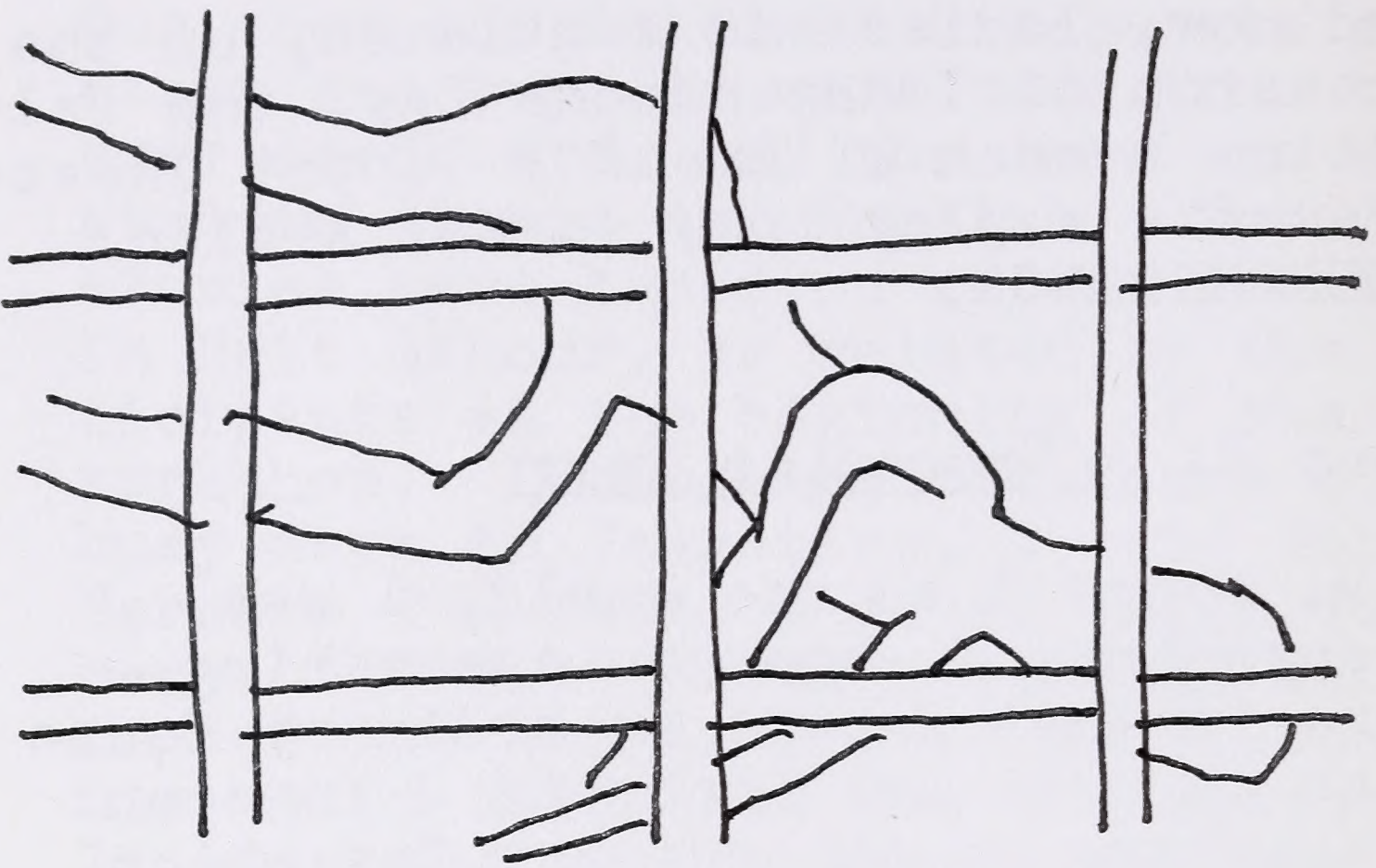
Night comes, the House yawns: I am tired. The Day says to the House: Go to sleep, I'll protect you. The House says: Thank you and good night, and goes to sleep.

In the middle of the Night Noise arrives in the city. The Noise runs up and down the street and stops at the House. The House is afraid.

Sleep jumps out of bed. The Noise yells at the House. The House trembles. The Noise yells again and the Boot kicks in the Door. Sleep hides under the bed. The Boot kicks over the bed. Sleep runs away and then the Gun kills the 2 Innocent Bystanders.

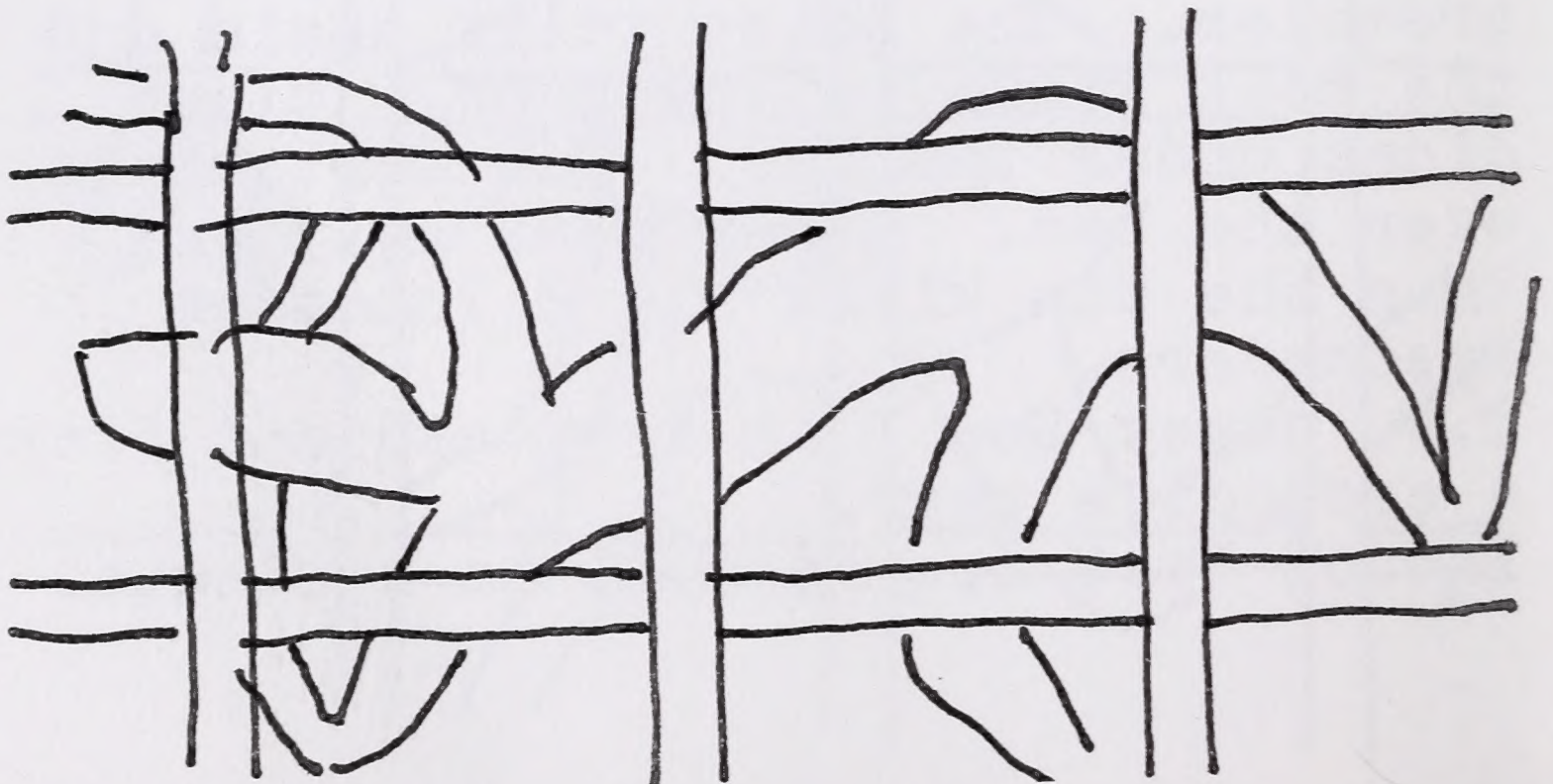
T.V. says: Now I am very sad and I cry a crocodile tear.

End of Part I. Part II in a minute.



Part II: Another Crocodile Tear

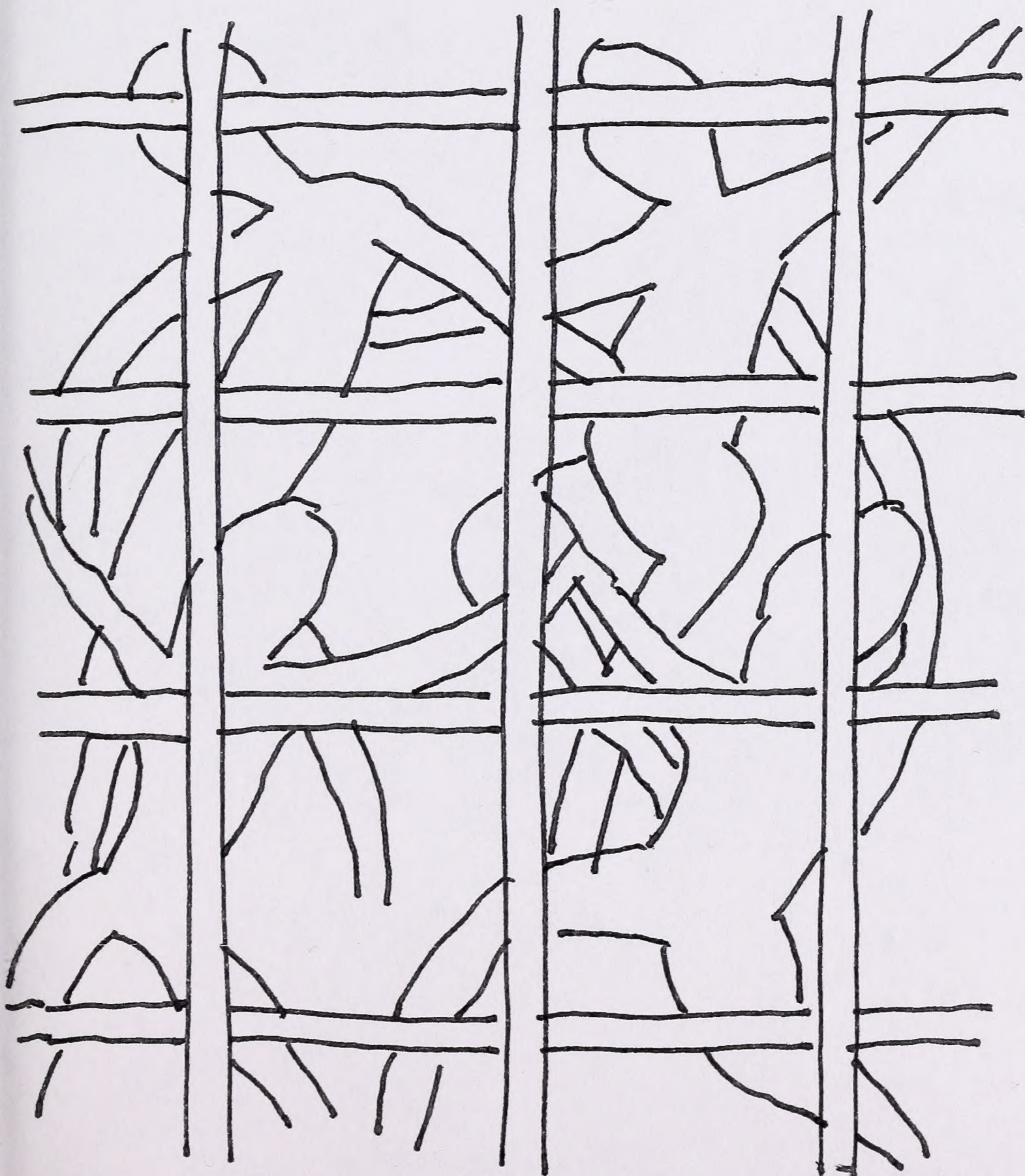
Another Day runs around like crazy.
Another Night comes. Another House
goes to sleep. Another Noise runs up
and down the street and stops at the
House. Another Boot pushes down the
Door and yells at the House: Where is
your son? The House says: I don't
know. And then Destruction destroys
the House and T.V. cries another
crocodile tear.
End of Part II. Part III in a minute.



Part III: Anti-Wall Dancing

- A) 4 Short Arm-and-Leg Dances Against the Wall.
- B) Fist Dance Against the Wall.
- C) Slow-motion Killing Dance of 2 Groups with Patriot Signs.
- D) Stomping-the-Wall-to-Dust Dance.

End of Part III. Part IV in a minute.



Part IV: Cardboard

After man was thrown out of Paradise he invented government and bureaucracy and an inappropriate amount of police and military to protect the government and to export its philosophy. But the citizens didn't like these protectors and their philosophy, so they made a lot of trouble. Then government came up with an excellent idea: cardboard, and with the help of cardboard: cardboard citizens! Cardboard citizens are extremely well-suited for all political purposes. The cardboard rights of cardboard citizens can be violated any time. Cardboard freedom of cardboard citizens can be fenced in behind walls. Cardboard countries of cardboard citizens can be occupied without any international complaint. Cardboard sons who protest the occupation can be jailed for the rest of their young lives and their cardboard relatives can be bulldozed or shot -- again without any international complaint.

But one day the world remembers its cardboard citizens, and the world rises up against the occupier, and the cardboard citizens throw away their cardboard citizenship, and the world stops the occupier, and the occupier stops occupying.

ES/pm